

MILITARY ATTACHE  
American Embassy  
Rome, Italy

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF

MILITARY DIVISION

4-3

2659-E-31/31

O-2 Report

6180  
WAR DEPARTMENT

ITALY (Military - Political)

Subject : Distribution of Troops.  
Military Operations in Eritrea.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
FEB 4  
2657-E-290

In connection with this report attention is invited to Italy No. 11241-3030, January 24, 1929; No. 11249-3850, January 30, 1929; No. 11260-3850, February 7, 1929 (COMMENT); No. 11386-3850/4860 (COMMENT); No. 12139-3850, September 25, 1930.

On December 27, 1930 the Italian press published the following despatch from Paris :

"The Agenzia Havas is advised from Addis Ababa that a series of engagements between Italian Ascari and Dancali raiders, pillagers of the Eritrean borderlands, ended with the defeat of the raiders. The bandits left on the ground about one hundred dead and wounded among whom was their chief Mohamed Jasin, killed in Italian territory."

On the same day the "Stampa" of Turin received the following despatch from their correspondent at Assab :

"The Stefani agency will no doubt have already informed you of the severe lesson that our troops inflicted upon the raiders from Biru and of the death of their sultan.

On arriving this morning at Assab I found the picturesque town still under the joyful impression produced by this timely and energetic action of the colonial government. The Dancali of the Biru sultanate are today subdued. Themselves subject to raids from the warlike Hoggerat of Gercer, Cobbò, Mai Gen, and Zebul, they had for the past year been carrying out retaliatory raids against tribes under our sovereignty even passing across the frontier and penetrating into our territory for considerable distances.

In the early part of the past month a column of our troops pressed forward to Ghirifò, the chief town of the Biru. After overpowering the garrisons of some redoubts which the sultan had believed strong enough to arrest our advance, our troops occupied and destroyed the conglomeration of huts that boasted the name of capital and pressed on in pursuit of the bandits who had taken flight two days before in the direction of the interior.

After a close and hot pursuit the ferocious Somalians were overtaken in the devilish Mogorros plain and after a day and night of fighting they were completely annihilated.

During the hot and bloody engagement about two hundred raiders were killed. Our losses amounted to eight soldiers among whom was Ossud Idris the brave local chief of Adi Ugri. A large quantity of captured weapons was sent to Asmara.

The lesson was severe and there is good reason to believe that it will be sufficient to put an end to the atrocious expeditions of Abyssinians who are still opposed to the politics of civilization and peace begun by Haïllassellassié I."

COMMENT : Ordinarily the Italian Government issues a communiqué when any of its colonial troops have an engagement of any consequence and it is worthy of note that no communiqué was issued in this

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## MILITARY ATTACHE

American Embassy

ADDIS ABABA

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G-2 Report

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COMMENT : instance. Excepting the Stampa, the entire Italian press (cont'd) ignored this affair. Evidently the Italian government did not wish to officially admit that Italian troops had crossed the Abyssinian border and fought an engagement on Abyssinian soil. Perhaps this engagement means that the new Governor of Eritrea, Riccardo ASTUTO, has persuaded the Italian Government that it is time to adopt a more aggressive policy towards Abyssinia. No further information has come to hand regarding the proposed Assab-Dessie automobile road but it is only reasonable to assume that incurring the enmity of the tribes inhabiting the region through which the road must pass will not make matters any easier for the Italians.

---

James L. Collins,  
Major, General Staff, U.S.A.,  
Military Attaché.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

A-C/C

HISTORICAL ADVISER

APR 9  
1931

DEPT. OF STATE

This looks to me like an  
Excellent report, worthy of  
publication in a special  
pamphlet by Commerce.

I'd love to know what  
product (see page 32) is  
imported into Somaliland  
from Kenya Colony to  
the tune of \$5,000,000 a year.  
Is it rice, sugar, cattle?

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

APR 9 - 1931

A-C/C  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

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Voluntary Economic and Political Report



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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

APR 6 1931

DIVISION OF  
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A.C.G. No. 1

May 5 1931

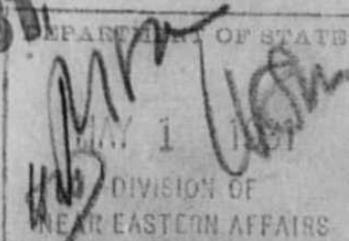
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APR 17 1931



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Rome

ITALIAN COLONIAL POSSESSIONS ALLOCATED TO THE  
ADEN CONSULATE

PART I. ERITREA

PART II. SOMALILAND

FILED

MAY 5 - 1931

From:

Carlton Hurst  
American Consul

Aden, Arabia,

Date of Completion: March 1, 1931

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## GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

With the unity and independance of Italy fully assured, the spirit of the country unconsciously felt the need of expansion to lands beyond the sea as fields for the development of the superfluous vitality of its people, and outlets for its increasing population. New markets for the absorbtion of Italian manufactures, and new sources from which to draw supplies of raw materials were required. In entering upon its present policy of colonial expansion the alimentary and industrial independance of the mother country was regarded as of primary importance. Of its 5 colonies, comprising Tripoli, Cirenaica, Eritrea, Somaliland and Oltre-Giuba, Eritrea and Somaliland were the first in the history of these conquests and were possessed during the last 20 years of the 19th century. A Governor who reports to the Minister of the Colonies directs the politics and administration, is the chier of the naval and land forces of each of these two colonies and has the power to declare a state of siege whenever public interests demand. Each colony is subdivided for purposes of administration. In Eritrea the Governor is assisted by a Council of Administration composed of the Governor who presides, the secretary general, the director of civil affairs and of finance, the commander of the troops and other functionaries when their presence is desired. In Somaliland a similar council exists as well as departments of agriculture, colonization, public works, railroad construction, and the like. Justice in these two colonies is administered through competent local

local courts invested with powers analogous to those of the courts of Italy.

Efforts are made both by the Ministry of the Colonies at Rome and by its local representatives to foment industrial activity in the colonies and exploit their natural resources. To this end shipping lines connecting the colonies with the mother country are encouraged and reciprocal customs duties authorized. Mineral concessions are granted to Italians only or to companies legally constituted of which the majority of the administrators and technical directors are Italians. When a mineral bed is discovered, the Governor is notified who may grant a concession for 50 years under certain conditions.

The State assumes nominal control of the lands not cultivated and not recognized as belonging to native land holders and regulates questions regarding concessions for their cultivation and colonization.

Government schools have been in operation in Eritrea for a number of years where elementary instruction is imparted and Italian taught, while in Somaliland the educational system, introduced more recently, is on a limited scale.

Postal, telegraph and telephone services correspond in all of the colonies to those of the mother country, the postal tariff is the same as in Italy, but the telegraph rates are higher.

PART I. ERITREA

INTRODUCTION

To the Aden Consulate has been allocated informal jurisdiction over the Italian Colony of Eritrea, which is separated from the Aden Protectorate by the Red Sea and the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb. The general form of Eritrea is that of an obtuse triangle with its base running in a northerly direction along the west coast of the Red Sea and extending from Cape Dumeirah on the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb to Cape Kasar, its ~~costal~~ length being about 670 miles. Anglo-Egyptian Sudan lies to the north and west of the colony, Ethiopia or Abyssinia to the south and west, while a line cutting across the southernmost end separates it from French Somaliland. The total area of Eritrea, according to statistics published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome, is (118,609 kilometers 2) 44,795 square miles, comprising (1,452 kilometers 2) 560 square miles of the archipelago of Dahlak, which is composed of 122 islands. The largest of these islands has an area of (900 kilometers 2) 347 square miles. There are other numerous islands near the peninsula of Buri and along the coast of Dancalia.

The native population of 410,000, is made up of many groups, anthropologically uniform, but diversified in language, social customs and religion. The plains and foothills are occupied chiefly by semi-nomadic shepherds largely of Arab or Hamitic stock. In the southern regions, Afar and Somali form the bulk of the population, while Ethiopians dwell on the plateau. Added to the native population there are about 5,000

Italian inhabitants, and some 500 Europeans of different nationalities.

The almost triangular form of the country does not form a geographical entity, being a more or less artificial unit. The western part contiguous to Ethiopia (of) an elevated plain which gradually slopes toward the Red Sea north of Massawa, while a mountain chain passing through Doncalia rises abruptly from the coast. In the mountainous region of Doncalia are some extinct volcanoes, but the summits of Erta-Ali and Alid are hidden by clouds of smoke. This volcanic formation has created numerous thermal and mineral springs in the region of Doncalia. Corresponding to the irregularities of the surface of the colony the climate is diversified, and ranges from tropical heat along the coast to temperate weather in the higher altitudes. The climate of the coast zone is hot and humid, the highest temperature being reached around Massawa, while in the mountains and mountain valleys having an altitude of some 8,000 feet or more, the climate is generally moderate.

Dense forests cover large sections of the western part of the country interspersed with tracts of arable land. So varied is the fauna of the Colony that in some parts the olive tree flourishes, and in others the date palm.

Although the country possesses no navigable rivers, the Setit and the Gash or Mareb rivers and their tributaries water the land through which they flow rendering

it

it fertile and productive. Beside these, the valleys of intermittent streams, which become rushing torrents during the rainy season and are dry during the summer, form highways into the interior. Along the courses of these valley routes which reach the Red Sea run caravan routes, flanked by telegraph lines.

#### GOVERNMENT

Early in 1870, Assab and the region around the bay of Assab were purchased from Sultan Berehan of Raheita for \$9,400, in order to acquire a coaling base for an Italian steamship company, and this purchase formed the nucleus of Italy's colonial possessions on the Red Sea. This territory was augmented by subsequent purchases and in negotiations until January, 1890, the various Italian possessions on the Red Sea were united in one province to which the name of Colony or Eritrea was given. This name is derived from the Roman name of Erythraeum Mare. The frontiers of the colony were further defined by subsequent treaties and agreements, and the work of organizing the administration of the country on a civil basis was inaugurated. The area was divided into 7 commissariats, three of which were grouped, in 1929, into the single Regional Commissariat of the Uplands with Asmara as its capital; the Western Lowlands forming another Regional Commissariat with its capital at Agordat; a third Regional Commissariat being that of the Eastern Lowlands with the capital at Massawa; while Assab became the capital of the Commissariat of that name embracing Southern Dancalia.

To a Civil Governor nominated by the King of Italy is entrusted an autonomous administration and the management of the finances of the Colony.

The military forces comprise 200 commissioned and ~~non~~ - commissioned Italians, and about 4,000 native troops. In addition to these a police force is maintained.

#### PRINCIPAL TOWNS

A relatively small part of the population resides in fixed abodes, many of the inhabitants being nomads or semi-nomads, living in encampments and pitching their tents in different localities generally chosen for proximity to sources of water. The chief cities of Eritrea are Asmara, the capital of the Colony, Massawa (also written Massawah and Massaua), Assab, Cheren, Agordat and Adi Ugri.

Asmara is situated on a plateau, 7,765 feet above sea level, and has a native population of 15,000, beside about 3,500 Europeans. In the center of the European quarter the Governor's palace is located with its offices and the residence of the Governor, the military quarters, a school, a hospital, an hotel and about 300 edifices for residences and offices, besides a cathedral recently constructed. The native quarter is separated from the European by a large market place. The town is surrounded by fortifications beyond which is the railroad station.

Massawa is an ancient commercial center of Arabic origin which became important during the Middle Ages, and is the chief port of the Colony of Eritrea. It stands on a coral island at the extreme north of the Bay of

Archico and is connected with the little island of Taulud by a dike  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a mile long, while Taulud is connected with the main land by a dike less than a mile in length. The city of Massawa includes the island of that name with its Arab and European quarters, two churches, a Buddhist temple, a Mosque, a hospital, and a market place; the Island of Taulud with the Governor's palace, the post office, the railroad station, schools and hotel; and the extreme end of the two peninsulas Abd-el-Kader and Grerar. At the latter point there is a fort and the radio station. The city and its suburbs have a population of 12,000, of which about 500 are Europeans.

In 1925 a free port was established at Massawa, and this advantage added to the physical formation of its bay renders it the best port on the Red Sea.

Assab is situated at the extreme northwest of the bay of Assab and is the ancient commercial emporium of Saba. Here the first attempts at colonization were made as early as 1870. It possesses excellent facilities for anchorage, a light house, and its position is of importance in trade with French Somaliland. It is also the outlet for much caravan merchandise proceeding from the interior. It has a population of 3,500 and is the capital of the Commissariat of Dancalia.

The capital of Dankali is Tajura, situated at the base of the Mabla range, a black wall of jagged volcanic peaks of which the highest point is the cone of Djebel Gudda, rising to a height of 6,000 feet. It is a town of white-washed stucco Arab houses, native huts

and

and mosques built along the shore.

#### MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

The construction of railroads in Eritrea was inaugurated in 1888 by a line running from Massawa to Saati. This work was continued until at present a railway line of 75 miles in length connects Massawa with Asmara, from there to Cheren a line of 65 miles, and from Cheren to Agordat a line of 55 miles. From this point in the direction of Tessenei, an extension is in construction. The activity of the railroads, which are under the direction of the colonial administration, is shown by the following table:

Years	Merchandise transported Metric Quintals	Passengers transported
1923-24	606,000	75,555
1924-25	855,000	92,235
1925-26	1,090,589	not given
1926-27	90,000	not given

Aside from the railroads much traffic in Eritrea is carried on by caravans, the merchandise being transported chiefly by camels. The importance of this movement on the caravan routes between Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sultanato del Biro in Pancalia, French Somali and Sudan is shown by the following table:

Years.	Outgoing.		
	Number of caravans	Number of men	Number of quadrupeds
1919	1,386	16,658	41,145
1920	1,945	21,759	61,790
Incoming.			
1919	1,169	15,500	30,295
1920	1,631	17,966	50,804

Beside repairing the principal existing caravan routes, some of which have been traversed since before the days of King Solomon, the Government of Eritrea has constructed a net work of waggon roads connecting numerous points, amounting altogether to approximately 275 miles of highways and 650 miles of narrower military roads.

The post offices of Eritrea number 15, the telegraph lines are 416 miles in length with 14 telegraph offices, and there are 1,023 miles of telephone lines. At Massawa, Assab, Asmara and Marsa Fatma Eri wireless telegraph stations have been established which communicate with the radio telegraphic systems of adjacent countries and with Italy. The number of radio messages received and transmitted per year amounts on an average to 40,000.

The port of Massawa on the Red Sea possesses peculiar natural advantages being enclosed by a peninsula and the island of Taulud in such a way that it may be regarded as having two ports, one affording anchorage in calm waters for vessels of great tonnage, and the other being available for smaller craft and coastwise steamers. Large sums have been spent by the government on port works and dredging. The following table gives the movement of navigation in the port of Massawa.

MOVEMENT OF NAVIGATION IN THE PORT OF MASSAWA

Nationality	ARRIVALS					DEPARTURES						
	Steamers					Sailing Vessels						
	No. of vessels	Tonnage (gross)	Cargo (Tons)	No. of vessels	Tonnage (gross)	Cargo (Tons)	No. of vessels	Tonnage (gross)	Cargo (Tons)	No. of vessels	Tonnage (gross)	Cargo (Tons)
Italian	193	525,698	49,992	191	524,848	43,143	623	10,864	2,899	589	10,635	1,320
English	34	54,194	15,775	34	54,194	33,210	9	422	226	8	383	12
Arabian	---	---	---	---	---	---	936	27,402	13,264	924	26,379	3,192
Sudanese	---	---	---	---	---	---	28	615	168	28	634	115
French	2	4,406	3,000	2	4,406	6,900	1	34	---	1	34	---
Dutch	1	4,064	610	1	4,064	6	---	---	---	---	---	---
Turkish	1	495	46	1	495	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Total	231	588,857	69,423	229	588,007	83,259	1,597	39,337	16,557	1,550	38,065	4,639

Passengers arriving 16,340

Passengers departing 23,943

	Steamers					Sailing Vessels						
	Steamers					Sailing Vessels						
Nationality	No. of vessels	Tonnage (gross)	Cargo (Tons)	No. of vessels	Tonnage (gross)	Cargo (Tons)	No. of vessels	Tonnage (gross)	Cargo (Tons)	No. of vessels	Tonnage (gross)	Cargo (Tons)
Italian	193	527,472	47,206	190	513,647	44,152	620	12,473	3,857	522	11,713	3,054
English	35	69,353	23,809	34	60,377	35,349	4	116	18	2	102	1
Arabian	---	---	---	---	---	---	695	21,899	6,118	782	22,148	1,736
Dutch	1	4,135	578	1	4,135	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Sudanese	---	---	---	---	---	---	21	473	65	18	165	---
Total	229	600,960	71,593	225	578,159	79,501	1,340	34,961	10,058	1,324	34,128	4,791

Passengers arriving 9,179

Passengers departing 14,862

## LEADING INDUSTRIES AND TYPES OF GOODS PRODUCED

Among the leading industries of the Colony of Eritrea the fisheries are perhaps the most important, in the annual value of their products and their variety. The pearl fisheries of Massawa and the Dahlak Islands yield about \$50,000 worth of pearls and \$150,000 worth of mother-of-pearl a year. In order to utilize the mother-of-pearl and augment its value, a factory for the manufacture of buttons has been established at Massawa, and its wares are exported to Italy and France. The exportation of fresh fish yielded about \$2,000,000 in 1928. There are also fish canning and preserving factories which are closely linked with the salt industry. Salt obtained from salt lakes and salt works located in Aussa and Doncali, is exported throughout Africa and considerable quantities are shipped to India.

Cattle raising occupies numerous inhabitants, oxen, sheep and goats forming a basis for the production of canned meats, the exportation of hides, and manufacture of leather goods. According to a census of the year 1905, the domestic animals of the colony were as follows:

Camels	46,935
Bovine cattle	295,717
Sheep, goats and kids	736,132
Asses and mules	28,762
Horses	1,027

Some results are obtained from the mineral resources of the Colony. Gold is found in various parts, notably at the mines worked near Asmara, and veins of auriferous quartz exist at Medrizien, Seroa, Dase and Gash as well

as

as other points. Copper and iron are found in Agametta, and manganese at Serobeti, while lignite also exists. A potash mine on the Ethiopian side of the frontier at Dolol, through an arrangement with the Ethiopian government, is worked by an Italian company and exports large quantities of potash to Italy, France, England and Japan. Some guano is obtained from the Eritrean islands of the Red Sea.

Agricultural industries in Eritrea are of considerable importance. Experiments in the cultivation of coffee, cotton and tobacco have proven successful. Flax cultivation, fomented by the government, has developed a commercial organization resulting in the exportation in 1928 of 96,000 metric quintals of flax. The export of bananas was initiated in 1928, and promises to develop into commercial importance. Coffee is cultivated in the territory of Foghena and Mensa, where about 200,000 plants have yielded some 50,000 metric quintals of a class resembling mocha. It is proposed to extend this cultivation in the regions of Sahel and Assaorta where, according to tradition, vast coffee plantations existed in the past.

A small though growing industry is carried on in incense, the crude product from Migiurtinia being purified and concentrated by a process in operation at Massawa. A flourishing industry developed in vegetable ivory, the nut of the dum palm. The dum palm flourishes in the marshes and along the banks of the rivers, but the species particularly adapted to industrial purposes is found chiefly in the valley of the Barca and the lower Mareb. That

which

which grows in the lowlands of Dancalia near Assab is worthless for commercial uses. The hard nut of the dum palm is utilized in making buttons and the factories for elaborating this product are at Agordat and Cheren. The dum palm, called by the Arabs, doum, is a useful tree, palm wine called doms being made from the fermented sap, and tarfi from which the natives weave mats being made from the fibre.

#### STATISTICS OF IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

The commerce of the Colony of Eritrea has developed within the past few years, and during the year 1928, the value of the goods imported showed a decrease as compared with 1927, while the value of the exports showed an increase over those of the previous year. The following table gives the value of the imports and exports for the three years, 1926, 1927 and 1928; as published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome:

Years	Value of Imports	Value of Exports by sea
1926	\$ 34,558,000	\$ 19,570,400
1927	40,307,200	16,921,200
1928	39,307,200	18,742,200

Cotton textiles, raw, bleached, dyed and printed, and all kinds of cotton yarn are the most important on the list of articles imported, having surpassed \$13,000,000 in value in 1926, and 1927, and dropping to \$12,300,000 in 1928. Coffee from Ethiopia, Yemen and other countries occupies the second place in the value of imports amounting to between \$6,000,000 and \$7,000,000 a year. Wines, spirits and beer imported during the

years

years under consideration represented a value of over \$1,000,000 each year. Coal and coke imports during 1926, were valued at \$1,248,000; in 1927 at \$1,615,000 and 1928 at \$550,000. About \$1,000,000 of sugar is imported annually. Food stuffs such as flour, rice, canned fruits and vegetables, olive oil and tea are imported in varying quantities, as well as machinery, railroad material, iron, steel and other manufactures of metals.

The item of greatest value among the exports of Eritrea is cow hides, which in 1927, and 1928, reached an annual value of about \$4,000,000, besides which goat skins and other hides amounted to over \$1,000,000 in value a year. Abyssinian coffee is the product of next greatest value in the exports, amounting to \$2,196,000 in 1926, \$2,182,000 in 1927, and \$2,745,000 in 1928; although in 1928, it was exceeded in value by Yemen coffee which rose from \$2,097,000 in 1926, to \$2,595,000 in 1927, and \$3,850,000 in 1928. The export of flax decreased from \$2,356,000 in 1926, to \$1,041,000 in 1927, and \$622,000 in 1928. Fresh, smoked and salted fish exports during 1926, amounted in value to \$312,000, in 1927, to \$465,000, and in 1928, to \$220,000. Salt exports amounted in value in 1926, to \$740,000, in 1927, to \$968,000 and in 1928, to \$825,000. Other articles of export comprise incense, mother-of-pearl, pearls, cotton, gums, potash, and cigarettes. The export of camels amounts to over \$100,000 worth annually.

The value of the exports from Eritrea shows an increase in 1928 of \$1,821,000 over that of 1927, although less than in 1926. These figures refer to the exports by sea, and in addition to this, much merchandise is

transported

transported by caravans to Ethiopia and British Sudan. In 1927 merchandise classified as in transit, increased in value over that of 1926, by \$800,000, some of which was transported by caravans, and some by coastwise steamers. The merchandise carried by coastwise steamers is chiefly destined for the coast of Arabia and consists of sugar, Indian rice, cotton goods, petroleum, candles, soap, and gold and silver money. From the coast of Arabia arrive coffee, dates, sesame oil, butter and hides.

Merchandise transported by caravans is a notable factor in the commercial life of the Colony, and its importance is seen by the fact that it absorbs 25 per cent of the entire Ethiopian merchandise exported. The leading lines transported by caravans are cotton goods, liquors, tobacco, cereals, honey, hides, oleaginous seeds, and coffee.

The following table shows the value of the merchandise transported by caravans as published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome:

Years	Value of Imports	Value of Exports
1926	\$ 12,956,200	\$ 7,582,000
1927	11,682,600	7,527,000
1928	15,509,400	10,060,000

#### IMPORTS AND COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

The chief source of the imports into the Colony of Eritrea is Italy, followed by Aden and the coast of Arabia. Imports from the United States occupy a relatively unimportant place in the list, and have decreased in value

from

from \$118,800 worth in 1926, to \$98,000 worth in 1928.

The following table gives the value of the imports into the Colony of Eritrea from the leading countries of origin for the years 1926, 1927 and 1928:

Countries of origin	IMPORTS		
	1926	1927	1928
Aden	\$ 5,638,600	4,852,800	2,101,800
Arabian coast	5,707,000	4,267,200	4,067,200
British India	580,400	1,041,400	5,129,200
Egypt	694,600	1,256,200	1,482,000
France	62,200	76,400	85,200
French Somaliland	2,262,000	1,972,000	2,601,000
Germany	60,000	84,600	790,600
Great Britain	586,000	721,400	271,800
Italy	20,410,400	22,752,400	20,862,200
Italian Somaliland	18,600	5,800	2,600
Sudan	511,800	559,000	969,400
United States	118,800	125,600	96,000
All other countries	1,707,600	2,794,400	2,766,400
Total	\$34,358,000	\$40,307,200	\$39,125,400

#### EXPORTS AND COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION

The most important market for the exports of the Colony of Eritrea is Italy, followed by the coast of Arabia and Aden, while valuable shipments are destined for France and British India. The United States absorbs comparatively little of the products of the Colony to which, however, the exports have increased from \$66,600 in 1926 to \$213,800 worth in 1928. The following table gives

gives the value of the exports from the Colony of Eritrea to the leading countries of destination during the years 1926, 1927, and 1928, as published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome:

Countries of Destination	EXPORTS BY SEA		
	1926	1927	1928
Aden	1,207,400	1,256,200	1,291,800
Arabian coast	2,019,800	670,800	1,091,200
British India	757,400	931,600	875,000
Egypt	254,400	195,400	218,600
France	898,000	539,800	1,084,600
French Somaliland	46,400	19,600	44,400
Germany	151,200	115,800	50,600
Great Britain	11,400	630,400	325,600
Italy	15,221,800	10,866,600	12,268,600
Italian Somaliland	151,800	207,200	149,400
Sudan	105,200	207,200	129,200
United States	66,600	107,200	215,800
All other countries	741,000	1,375,400	999,600
Total	19,570,400	16,921,200	18,742,200

#### CREDIT TERMS AFFECTING TRADE

The revenue of the Colony of Eritrea is derived from the customs duties, taxation, and a tribute paid by the native tribes or nomads. It is practically self-supporting, and any deficit that may occur is supplemented by grants from Italy.

The Banca d'Italia which has branches at Asmara, Massawa, Cheren and Adi-Caieh has devoted itself to foment the

the growth and vitality of agricultural and industrial prosperity. The Banca Coloniale di Credito also conducts important banking negotiations in the Colony through its bank in Asmara, and has a capital of \$400,000, besides which, also at Asmara, the Banca Cooperativa, Popolare Eritrea, with a capital of \$163,000, serves commercial needs.

Italian is the official language(s) of the Colony, and may be used in correspondence, while English is also understood commercially. The languages of the native population are Arabic, Somali and Ethiopian dialects.

The Italian Lira, equal to about 5 cents, is the unit of official statistics and in use in international commerce, while the native population employs the Maria Theresa dollar as a unit of currency.

The existing customs tariff were established by Royal Decree in 1899, and are variable and preferential.

PART II. SOMALILAND

INTRODUCTION

In an informal way the Aden Consulate has jurisdiction over Italian Somaliland, a stretch of country touching the southern shores of the Gulf of Aden. The coastline of Italian Somaliland extends from the border of British Somaliland eastward from Bandar Ziadeh to Cape Guardafui, a stretch of coast on the Gulf of Aden, thence southward along the Indian Ocean to Ras Chiamboni and the border Kenya. Its western or inland borders are formed by British Somaliland, Ethiopia and Kenya. Its extensive coast line is largely rock bound throughout its 1,200 miles of length and from the shore rise a succession of hills fringed with narrow margins of beach. Cape Guardafui which forms what is known as the "Horn of Africa", is a nearly vertical wall of rock rising abruptly from the sea to a height of 900 feet facing the Gulf of Aden on the north and the Indian ocean on the east. Its name has been attributed to the early Portuguese mariners, who on account of the deep waters at its base and the prevalence of winds and ocean currents called it "guardafu", meaning "beware".

The area of Italian Somaliland cannot be given exactly owing to a scarcity of data on some of its confines, but according to statistics published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome for the year 1930, its superficial area comprised 251,660 square miles (600,000 Km<sup>2</sup>). Parts of the country are mountainous, traversed by mountain torrents which are generally dry. In the southern part, around the mouth of the Juba river

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river a number of small islands separate the coast from the sea in such a manner as to form a natural port at Kismayu, and again at Tula. The climate varies with the altitude, but is mostly hot and dry, while the coast is lashed by the periodic winds of the monsoon.

The indigenous population of Italian Somaliland comprises two principal ethnological elements, the more numerous being the Somali, and the remainder being outcast races. The Somali are not pure Hamites, but show traces of Galla, Afra, Arab, Ethiopian and negro blood, their color varying from Arab hue to black. The majority of them are nomads, devoted to cattle raising, and they lead their herds from place to place in search of pasture. Comparatively few are settled in fixed places of abode, but, such as are, live in towns near the coast. They are a warlike people, constantly engaged in tribal disputes, and are armed with spears, shields, short swords, and guns when available. The outcast races, which are scattered throughout the country, are workers in iron and leather, collecting resin and gums. The foreign population consisting chiefly of Italians, a few French and some Greeks have settled chiefly along the coast of the Gulf of Aden, while in the southern part of the country known as El-Benadir, there is a settlement of Arabs. According to the census of 1929, as published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome, the entire population of Somaliland numbered 1,500,000.

The tropical African fauna is here found in all of its wealth and variety. Lions, leopards, hyenas, elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, panthers, jackals, wild dogs,

dogs, giraffes, antelopes and zebras abound, as well as monkeys, baboons, squirrels, hares, rabbits, lizards, serpents and many other animals. Extensive forests cover much of the country, in some parts forests of cedars are encountered, while bush plants such as umbrella mimosa, acacia, aloes and evergreen lauraceous trees are found mingled with large thorn bushes. These bush plants yield highly fragrant resins and balsams such as frankincense and myrrh.

#### GOVERNMENT

Italian Somaliland acquired fame among the ancients of Egypt, Phoenicia and Rome by its commerce in perfumes and resins, but drifted into oblivion during the Middle Ages. Parts of the country were included in the Zenj empire, which declined at the close of the 15th century. Somaliland was conquered by the Portuguese during the 16th century, by the imans of Muscat during the 17th century, for a time it belonged to the sultans of Zanzibar and later became a dependant of Egypt. After 1882 it was under the British protectorate, and finally in 1885, through a treaty with the Sultan of Zanzibar a commercial convention was concluded with Italy. Subsequently the entire coast of the British Somali protectorate, through agreements with Great Britain, Zanzibar and Ethiopia fell under the Italian sphere of influence. In 1892, the Italian government leased the ports of Brava, Merca., Mogadiscio and Uarsceh from the Sultan of Zanzibar for 50 years, which by a concession were administered by the Filonardi Company, and later by the Benadir Company.

The Sultan, in 1905, ceded his rights to the Benadir ports to Italy for \$720,000, Italy took over the administration and placed the Colony under a Civil Governor. The confines of the Colony were further extended by purchase, agreements, and conquest until in 1928, it was united under the Italian flag and began a period of peaceful colonial policy.

The Colony is divided into 8 Commissariats with its capital at Mogadiscio. Its revenues are derived from the customs which are variable and strongly preferential, the post and telegraph, and various internal taxes and tributes. Schools have been established and a military force is maintained.

#### CHIEF CENTERS OF POPULATION

The wandering tribes which occupy Italian Somali form the greater part of the population and it is chiefly the outcast tribes which form small villages and devote themselves to agriculture. These villages are frequently grouped along water courses so that together they constitute centers of importance. However, some of the Somali have fixed residences, notably in the interior at Dafet, Baidoa, and Bur Acaba, but they remain in them only a part of the year, leaving them for long periods to follow their cattle to pasturage.

The center of population in southern Somali is Mogadiscio, an ancient and flourishing town situated on a rocky promontory between the dunes and the sea. It was founded by the Arabs from the Persian Gulf in the 9th or 10th century, and is now the capital of Italian Somaliland.

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The antiquity of the town is recorded in its buildings surrounded by a wall with three gateways. Its mosques, minarets, avenues of palms, tombs and ancient lighthouse form a contrast to the modernized palaces of the Governor, Government offices, military commander and other Government edifices. Its population in 1925 numbered 21,000, including the troops. The Italian Colony numbers about 300.

Like Magadiscio, the ancient town of Merca (Meurka or Marka), was founded by the Arabs. It is on a rocky point jutting into the sea, and has a population of about 8,000. In the surrounding country are some large villages, which with the town itself create a diffuse area of population. Merca has a post office, a radio station, is the seat of the Zoological Experimental Station, and has two lighthouses.

Juba is a modern town situated on a hill near the mouth of the Juba river, nearly opposite the village of Gobeun. It is a port which is rendered almost inaccessible for months together by its exposure to moving sand banks. It is, however, the port of departure for a line of vessels, and its population is estimated at 400. Margherita and Gelib are villages in this vicinity.

Lugh is a commercial center in the interior about 240 miles from the mouth of the Juba. It stands on the left bank of the river and is an entrepot for trade with the Boran district. Its importance has increased since the opening of commercial routes leading toward Harrar and the Colony of Kenya.

Alula, with about 1,500 inhabitants, is situated on

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the northern shores of the Colony, on the Gulf of Aden, about 346 miles from Aden. It is the seat of the Commissariat of Migiurtine. Sailing vessels are able to enter the port and it is not unimportant as an Arab commercial center, as well as for fishing interests.

#### MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

Internal communication, especially as regards the transportation of merchandise, is largely conducted by camel caravans. These caravans are particularly important in southern Somali where the many wells, and the existence of two rivers render this form of travel practicable. The principal caravan arteries form a net work of roads of about 4,970 miles in extent connecting the centers of population in the interior with Mogadiscio and the coast.

A railroad <sup>is under construction,</sup> of which 70 miles is completed connecting Mogadiscio with Abruzzi. The railroad carried in one year 13,943 passengers, and 39,826,452 metric tons of freight. The 952 miles of automobile road which existed in 1925, have been increased to 4,970 miles, greatly facilitating commerce and travel to Kenya and Ethiopia, and interior towns along their route.

There are many miles of telephone lines installed throughout the Colony besides telegraph lines. Its vast radio connections are of strategic as well as commercial value facilitating exchanges with naval and mercantile vessels in eastern waters, and, by means of the radio stations at Mogadiscio, and Massawa in the Colony of Eritrea, 54 stations throughout the world may be heard.

The rocky coast of Italian Somaliland is unfavorable to shipping and no port exists which possesses the natural

formation

formation necessary to render it of value as a harbor. Even Mogadiscio, the capital, and the head or all of the interests of the Colony is so situated that its approach from the sea is frequently impossible. Hafun or Ras Hafun has two large bays which after the monsoon may be entered by small vessels, and port works are there under construction. Merca also suffers from the lack of a harbor, but the great expense of making it a safe port for vessels, has thus far prevented undertaking the work. Brava is a more promising place for the development of a port, and 15 years ago a bridge was constructed there which is most useful for embarkation. At Chisimaio conditions are more favorable for a harbor and its position might be adapted to shelter vessels of any tonnage.

The following table published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome gives the movement of navigation in Italian Somaliland in 1928.

MOVEMENT OF NAVIGATION IN ITALIAN SOMALILAND IN 1928

<u>Nationality</u>	ARRIVALS			DEPARTURES				
	No. of vessels	Tonnage (gross)	Cargo (Tons)	STEAMERS	No. of vessels	Tonnage (gross)	Cargo (Tons)	Passengers
Italian	326	793,284	31,432	6,858	326	793,284	7,311	6,161
English	41	24,097	3,918	652	41	24,097	494	613
German	3	19,442	4,485	---	3	19,442	---	---
Greek	1	2,313	---	---	1	2,313	20	---
Total	371	839,136	39,835	7,510	371	839,136	7,825	6,774

	SAILING VESSELS							
Italian	476	10,750	3,229	959	429	10,272	2,169	1,523
French	4	37	---	---	4	37	---	---
English	33	825	411	28	31	823	27	16
Arab	216	11,381	2,050	963	200	10,679	422	477
Total	729	22,993	5,690	1,950	664	21,811	2,618	2,016

Regarding extensive movement on caravan routes throughout Italian Somaliland complete statistics are not available as much of this class of transportation is not recorded. The following table, however, gives an idea of its intensity:

Years	Number of Caravans	Number of Camels	Value of merchandise transported
1926	28,559	156,008	\$ 12,257,215
1927	24,792	154,550	10,994,905
1928	20,122	118,985	10,087,487

The gradual decrease in this traffic is attributed to the greater use of automobiles and auto trucks which is facilitated by the improvement of the roads.

#### LEADING INDUSTRIES AND CLASSES OF PRODUCTION

The mineral wealth of Somaliland has not yet been exploited although doubtless of some value. One of the principal products of the country is salt, and important salt works exist in the lagoon of Hordio in the northern part of the peninsula of Hafun. These salt works are in a position to produce 300,000 tons of salt annually and although they have been less than a year in operation, they have shown good results.

Among the largest industrial undertakings in the Colony is a factory at Duca degli Abruzzi for the extraction of oil from oleaginous seeds and plants, principally cottonseed oil, castor oil and sesame oil. It has a capacity for pressing 600 kilograms or seeds an hour. Other factories manufacture oils and soaps. An important sawmill, with lumber yard, is in operation at Mogadiscio for the elaboration of the woods of the Colony.

The agricultural products of the country form one of its

its leading assets. Although much of the land is barren, the fertile parts yield rich crops. Bananas, cotton and sugar cane, castor beans, copra and grains are cultivated.

The area devoted to the cultivation of the banana is now more than double that of last year and the export of bananas rose from 450 metric quintals in 1928, to 2,000 metric quintals in 1929, and 2,500 during the first 6 months of 1930. This increase is largely owing to the improvement in the quality of the banana raised, and to the fact that greater space is now available on ships equipped with refrigeration.

More than 19,000 acres are devoted to the cultivation of cotton, of which large shipments are exported. The crop of third importance in the colony is maize. The terrain devoted to the cultivation of corn increased from 7,413 acres in 1927, to 24,710 acres in 1930. Two crops are garnered annually and amply supply the demands of Somaliland for corn, while later large quantities will be available for export. The Government is making arrangements for the transportation and standardization of this product.

A sugar mill located at Duca degli Abruzzi converts the cane into raw sugar at the rate of 300 metric quintals daily, beside producing molasses and alcohol, and near this factory a modern distillery is situated.

Not far from Mogadiscio argillaceous clay and silica have been found adapted to the production of cement, which it is planned to utilize in constructing ports, bridges, dikes and roads.

Cattle raising is one of the chief occupations of the natives of the country who possess vast herds and carry

on a flourishing trade in hides and skins. Statistics published in 1930 give the number of domestic animals in the Colony as follows:

Bovine animals	1,111,945
Camels	612,503
Sheep	855,263
Goats	1,185,417
Horses	15,158

#### STATISTICS OF IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

Importation into Italian Somaliland exceeds exportation by a large margin. It should be noted, however, that the value of the merchandise exported in 1928, was over \$3,000,000 more than that of the preceding year. The following table gives the value of the imports and the exports by sea for the three most recent years available as published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome:

Years	Value of Imports	Value of Exports by sea
1926	25,888,400	5,806,600
1927	51,249,200	5,060,200
1928	26,851,600	8,466,000

Large quantities of merchandise are transported by caravans of camels, and the statistics of this movement refer to the internal commerce of the country and its countries surrounding it on land. The volume of this commerce is shown in the following table for the year 1928:

Caravans arriving at the coast from the interior	Camels	Value of merchandise transported
Number 16,645	Number 105,173	\$7,951,146
Caravans leaving the coast for the interior Number 3,477	13,810	2,136,345

The most valuable item of importation is textiles of unbleached cotton, of which \$5,845,200 were imported in 1927; and \$3,153,200 in 1928; while the value of printed and various cotton goods amounted in 1927, to \$3,844,400; against \$2,756,600 in 1928. India, Aden and Japan are the leading countries of origin of these imports, followed by Italy. Imports of sugar are second in value, having amounted to \$2,886,200 worth in 1927; and \$2,821,600 in 1928. The value of rice imported increased from \$1,810,200 in 1927, to \$2,451,200 in 1928; and flour from \$975,600 worth in 1927, to \$1,010,800 in 1928. The industrial requirements of Somaliland are reflected in the increased importation of iron, steel and benzine; while the value of petroleum imports fell from \$659,400 worth in 1927 to \$399,200 worth in 1928. The value of coffee imports decreased, while those of tea increased in 1928, as compared with 1927. The imports of bottled wines, sesame oil and manufactured tobacco increased in 1928 over these imports in 1927; while the value of the machinery and lumber imported decreased. The rise in benzine or gasoline imported is attributed to the construction of a new automobile road which connects the more important commercial centers of the country.

Textile

The increase in the value of the exports from the country displays growing activity in the development of its resources. Dried skins form the bulk of the export trade, the value of leopard skins exported during 1927, having been \$565,000; and in 1928, \$514,800; of antelope skins \$874,800 in 1927, and \$1,007,000 in 1928; skins of bovine cattle \$553,800 in 1927, and \$1,191,000 in 1928;

and

and skins of goats and kids \$745,600 in 1927, and \$1,235,800 in 1928. The export of bale cotton increased from \$949,000 worth in 1927, to \$1,877,600 in 1928. A notable increase is seen in the value of the incense exported from \$189,200 worth in 1927, to \$502,200 worth in 1928. Raw sugar, which does not appear in the list of exports of the year 1927, was exported in 1928, to the value of \$384,200. The export of canned fish decreased while dried and salted fish increased in 1928. Exports of mother-of-pearl showed a slight increase, while myrrh exports rose from \$23,000 in 1927, to \$78,800 in 1928.

#### VALUE OF IMPORTS AND COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

The chief source of supply for Somaliland is Aden whence about one-third of the imports is drawn, followed by Italy and Kenya Colony. Valuable shipments are also received from India and Egypt. Importations from the United States have decreased during the years 1926, 1927, and 1928, and in the latter year their value was only \$7,200. This is attributed to a shifting of trade in cotton textiles, now supplied to the Colony by Italy in greater quantities. The following table published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome gives the countries of origin of the merchandise imported:

IMPORTS

Countries of Origin	1926 \$	1927 \$	1928 \$
Aden	7,585,200	11,880,800	7,758,400
Arabia	250,600	578,400	908,800
Belgium	949,400	---	---
Czechoslovakia	564,800	984,800	123,000
Egypt	552,600	1,141,200	1,042,400
Eritrea	2,218,600	226,600	475,000
France	78,600	76,600	285,200
Germany	111,000	175,200	589,600
Great Britain	186,200	155,200	61,400
Hungary	534,200	431,400	---
India	1,385,600	2,526,800	656,200
Italy	7,537,200	8,028,200	5,867,200
Jugoslavia	256,800	200,200	1,225,600
Kenya Colony	1,199,600	2,865,000	5,256,600 - ?
Spain	5,800	1,600	5,000
Switzerland	8,800	8,000	28,200
United States	271,000	159,800	7,200
Zanzibar	1,566,000	1,455,000	2,159,400
All other countries	1,226,400	554,400	604,400
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Total	25,888,400	51,249,200	26,831,600

VALUE OF EXPORTS AND COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION

The increase in the value of the exports from Italian Somaliland is most notable in the value of the merchandise shipped by sea to Italy and Aden, Zanzibar standing third as a country of destination in the year 1928. None of the exports of the Colony were destined for the United States during the three years under consideration. The countries

countries of destination of the merchandise exported by sea during the years 1926, 1927 and 1928, as published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome are shown in the following table:

EXPORTED BY SEA			
Countries of Destination	1926 \$	1927 \$	1928 \$
Aden	948,200	701,600	1,101,800
Arabia.	47,000	281,200	585,400
Eritrea	20,600	35,200	104,600
France	104,000	11,200	14,800
Germany	---	4,200	28,600
Great Britain	9,200	52,400	8,800
India	---	4,600	13,600
Italy	5,395,900	3,050,800	5,535,200
Kenya Colony	86,200	147,400	140,000
Zanzibar	<u>1,195,500</u>	<u>791,600</u>	<u>933,800</u>
Total	<u>5,806,600</u>	<u>5,060,200</u>	<u>8,466,000</u>

#### CONDITIONS AFFECTING TRADE

The Banca d'Italia with branches at Mogadiscio and Chisimaio conducts most of the banking business of the Colony, in which some smaller banking institutions co-operate. Since 1925, the official medium of commerce has been the Italian Lira, equal to about 5 cents, and the value of the Italian "rupia" has been stabilized as equivalent to 8 Liras. The Maria Theresa dollar (thaler) is in use among the native population, a silver coin worth about \$0.71, which has been employed since 1780, as a unit of currency in the Levant.

The official language of the Colony is Italian, and correspondence

correspondence with merchants should preferably be in Italian, although English and French are understood by the leading importers and exporters. Arabic is also in use commercially, but the native population speaks Somali and Ethiopian dialects. The metric system is used in weights and measures.

The customs tariff now in force fixes variable and preferential duties. They were established by Royal Decree in August, 1911.

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# DOCUMENT FILE

## NOTE

SEE 865a.00/74 FOR #1404

FROM Italy ( Kirk ) DATED May 6, 1932  
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### REGARDING:

Encloses copy and translation of Italian Colonial Budget Report, which contains accounts of the political, economic, and social conditions prevailing in Eritrea.

865A.00/4

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Central File: Decimal File 865A.00, Internal Affairs Of States, Eritrea, Political Affairs., May 6, 1932. 6 May 1932. MS European Colonialism in the Early 20th Century. National Archives (United States). Archives Unbound, <link.gale.com%2Fapps%2Fdoc%2FSC5109731177%2FGDSC%3Fu%3Domni%26sid%3Dbookmark-GDSC>. Accessed 18 June 2025.